

S. M. BURROUGHS.

Through English Spectacles.

In the history of modern pharmacy no single item of personal news has caused so spontaneous an outburst of sorrow as the recent announcement of the sudden death of Mr. S. M. Burroughs. Burroughs was a leader among us, and we could ill afford to lose a man of such striking individuality at the moment when almost any career of public usefulness had become possible for him. The news of his death came like a winter thunderclap and provoked a wave of profound feeling from one end of the land to the other. It is only now, when time has lighted the shadow of our great loss, that we can justly gauge the value of the man and of his life work. In thus taking his measure it is well to remember that Burroughs was not the mere one-dimensional being that some of his biographers would have us think. He was a man of many parts. He had great qualities and the defects of those qualities. He was so very lovable because he was so very human and so wholesomely natural.

From Medina to London.

Silas Mainville Burroughs was born at Medina, N. Y., on the 24th of December, 1846. His parents were people of means and position, his father being a Congressman. There was no pressing necessity for him to go into business, but partly because there is not in America, as in England, any glamor surrounding the life of a professional gentleman, and mostly because young Burroughs was not the man to rest idle when there was a chance of moving, he elected to go into business. He was apprenticed to a druggist in Lockport, N. Y., in 1870, and in 1873 went to John Wyeth & Brother of Philadelphia. In this firm his keen business qualities soon attracted fitting notice, and he rose rapidly to the post of traveller, and in November, 1878, came to England as the firm's agent. He soon saw what a vast field for enterprise England presented in those barbarous days of inelegant pharmacy, and in 1879 terminated his connection with John Wyeth & Brother and started in business for himself, as an agent for American goods. His entire premises consisted of one room on the first floor of No. 8 Snow Hill.

From London to Monte Carlo.

In 1880 Burroughs crossed to America to talk over affairs with his old friend Henry S. Wellcome. The latter was still associated, as when Burroughs first knew him, with McKesson & Robbins, of New York, and it was well recognized that Wellcome had made a great success in that firm's manufacturing department. Long before Burroughs first came over to England, and without any idea of effecting a partnership, these two had discussed the relative merits of London and New York as a manufacturing, shipping and business center for international commerce, and they had decided in favor of London. Both had closely followed the drift of English pharmacy and were convinced that in England, more than in any other country, the foundations of a large shipping trade could be best laid and the products

of the Newer Pharmacy most profitably put on the market. But when Burroughs visited his future partner, that gentleman had planned a different future for himself, and had such favorable prospects that it took all the reserve force of the former's breezy eloquence to persuade him to throw in his lot with an ambitious British venture. This partnership, the striking success of which is known to all the world, was formed in 1880. The firm soon commenced to manufacture for themselves, and promptly engaged an efficient corps of travelling representatives, one member of which was sent on a tour through India, Australia, China and Japan. In the year 1881 occurred an important event in the history of the firm. The steam yacht "Ceylon" then sailed on a lazy voyage around the world, and Burroughs took a passage in her. He fortified himself with armies of samples, and set out to promote the firm's project of establishing a world-wide export trade. Calling at various ports in Spain and Portugal, the steamer entered the Mediterranean, crept along the North coast, worked up to Constantinople and returned to Egypt. It then proceeded through the Suez Canal to India, where Burroughs left the yacht and spent a year travelling and introducing the firm's products. He then continued his journey by P. and O. steamer to Australia and New Zealand, and remained there more than a year. He returned by way of the United States, where he spent eight months. It

was during this stay in America that he married Miss Olive Chase, of Western New York State. Returning to London in 1884 he was agreeably surprised to see the noble progress in home and foreign business that his partner had made since he left England in 1881. Step by step the ground, first, second and third floors of No. 8 Snow Hill had been absorbed, and factory premises secured in Cock Lane. In 1883, these buildings proving insufficient for the ever growing business of the firm, the present offices, Snow Hill Buildings, on the opposite side of the road have been built and furnished. The costly and artistic fittings of these offices, designed by Wellcome, were a revelation to the untravelled members of the British drug trade. Nothing like them had ever been seen in London before. In 1882 the firm had established the extensive works at Wandsworth, in which they continued to manufacture until the place was burnt down in 1889.

In hunting out the site for a newer and larger factory after the destruction of the Wandsworth works, the firm chanced upon the town of Dartford and its disused Phoenix Paper Mills. Dartford is a sleepy old town in the Dickens country, a quaint, mellow, old-world place, where, in the courtyard of the old Bull Inn, they still show you the massive oak staircase, up which a notorious highwayman rode on horseback to escape pursuit. The firm took Dartford by the shoulders and gave it a vigorous shaking. It woke up and rubbed its eyes and stared at the re-opening ceremonies at the Phoenix Mills. Everybody who was anybody in the medical and chemical worlds went down to Dartford by special train that day and admired the model factory that the firm has been improving ever since. And



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Dartford has not ceased staring to this day. Its stare grew moist when, in 1894, Burroughs offered a check of £1000 to pay half the expenses of building the Cottage Hospital, which the town had wanted for many a long day. The hospital was duly built, and christened the Livingstone Memorial Hospital, but Dartford spells Livingstone with a B. In the December of 1894, after a slight illness, brought on by a severe cold, Burroughs was ordered abroad for a change. For four years he had wintered in the South of France, and the old love rose strong within him once more. So he started off on a cycling tour across the old ground, and said "good-bye" to multitudes of friends with as light a heart as of old. He reached Toulon, and passed along the Riviera to his favorite health resort, delightful Monte Carlo. There he took an apparently slight chill, and was ordered off to bed. On February 6th, after three days' illness, double pneumonia claimed another victim.

Burroughs as Worker.

Not a remote cause of Burroughs' untimely death was the fact that he persisted in doing too much work, and failed to allow himself sufficient rest. Hard in muscle, lithe and agile in body, quick in movement, strong and healthy as he was, he yet only maintained his good health by constant bodily exercise. He had the energy and nervous force of a dozen ordinary men, and his restless spirit dragged his weaker body to an open grave. Nothing less than the physique of a Samson could have kept up under such a spirit.

It is related, as an example of the immense amount of work that he would cram into twenty-four hours, that in the early days of the Dartford factory he would frequently be found by the early workmen waiting for the works to open, and filling in the spare time by writing letters to the papers on the subject of Land Reform, or Taxation of Machinery. After three or four hours' work at Dartford, he would go by cycle or rail to Snow Hill, put in as strenuous a day's work as any man in London, and then hurry off to some social function or political meeting, often at a great distance from home. Every minute of his life was crammed with work, he never allowed himself a moment's pause. He took his pleasures at the same feverish pace as his work. He made his business a pleasure and his pleasure a business. But his pleasures were none the less real to him, and fortunate indeed were those who could call him friend and share them.

As Friend.

He had more best friends than any other man in the drug trade. We have met scores of them since his death. That was one of the chief reasons of his social success. He brimmed over with cordiality and good fellowship, and exercised a magnetic attraction over the best of all sorts and conditions of men. He compelled friendship, no one could deny him. It is said that if, as was often the case, he had been travelling all night and arrived in a new town about five or six o'clock in the morning, he would have little compunction in ringing up the nearest chemist, introducing himself and engaging that gentleman in conversation. And the strange thing about it was that before long that chemist would cease to resent his visitor's unconventionality, would soften under the ready flow of conversation, and finally thank his stars that this prince of good fellows had not elected to ring the opposition night-bell.

As Salesman.

This marvellous gift of language was never so freely exercised as when Burroughs was pushing the firm's business, and he spent the greater part of his time travelling. When a chemist told Burroughs that he did not want to stock any of the firm's products, but would

get them to order if asked for, and considered that statement final, the traveller would smile a tender smile. He knew better. He would proceed to chat to that chemist. He used that man's fads as levers, he identified himself with that man's interests. He was sweetly reasonable, but gently argumentative. He had at command a rippling stream of conversation flecked ever with the sunshine of humor. He was irresistible. In the space of ten minutes the hard lines round that chemist's mouth began to soften, in a quarter of an hour the world opened out to him. He perceived what a great aching void there had been in his life. He found that for many a long day he had been yearning for just such goods as were now offered him, and his heart went out to the man who had brought the unattainable within his reach.

As Employer.

As a set-off to his marked keenness in pushing business must be chronicled his openhanded generosity to the firm's employees, and his munificent donations to political and charitable objects. To "our people," as he lovingly called them, he was everything that a considerate man could be. He watched over their comfort and happiness as a father watches over that of his family. Both partners, in fact, rivalled each other in their efforts for the welfare of their staff. They introduced an eight hours' day and a profit-sharing system. They gave the employees a library and reading-room, a swimming-bath, and beautiful grounds for their recreation. They were never tired of planning excursions, sports, concerts, and lectures for their people's amusement, and, if possible, always made a point of being present to assist in promoting the general enjoyment. It seemed to them a real obligation as well as a pleasure to look well after the people who were assisting in building their fortunes. In Burroughs' will a twenty-fourth part of his fortune was bequeathed to the firm's employees.

As Christian and Philanthropist.

Burroughs had the deepest religious convictions, as became a man with Puritan blood in his veins, and he put in daily practice the belief that was in him. Generally he was tolerant of other men's opinions, and appreciated a man none the less because he held different religious views. He was keenly intolerant of impurity in thought and speech, and any such looseness would bring down a gentle reproof that was often misunderstood. He supported religious movements after his own heart with a lavish generosity. His ear was ever ready and his pocket open to a tale of distress. At times he had wonderful insight into character and has been known to march off a lying claimant for his help to the nearest police station. At times, however, he seemed to be at the mercy of rogues and leeches, who, understanding his single-mindedness, professed sympathy with his religious or political opinions with ulterior motives. His liberality extended itself to the advanced political movements with which he identified himself. His name was on the subscription lists of most of the labor and socialistic clubs, and, although not himself a collectivist, he lost no opportunity of helping forward the wider and more sympathetic projects of real socialism.

As Politician.

His own practical creed did not advance beyond the gospel of Henry George and the reform of the land question. He scoffed much at the belief that land belonged absolutely to anybody, and more at the idea that the particular robber who assumed the proprietorship should be entitled to increased value through the growth of a town or municipal improvements. And as theory was practice with him, he is said to

have transferred to a corporation the proprietorship of a piece of land which had greatly increased in value owing to no exertions of his own. He wanted to see the land nationalized, or, failing that, to tax that which was really everybody's property for the benefit of everybody. He was a great believer in Free Travel as a means of untying the knot of town life. Free railways, he thought, would not only equalize land values in the center and suburbs of towns, but also lessen the congestion and unhealthiness of town life. He had been freely spoken of as a possible Liberal parliamentary candidate for Dartford at the next election, and it is probable that he intended before long to enter public life. Some such idea he must have had when he took out letters of naturalization as a British subject a year or two back.

Secret of Success.

The proving of Burroughs' will revealed the fact that he had amassed a fortune of considerably over £125,000. Assuming that his partner has made some such similar amount, we are confronted with the fact that the firm accumulated a sum of a quarter of a million pounds sterling, roughly \$1,250,000, in about fifteen years. This was done in spite of barbaric extravagances in all directions, and an almost spendthrift disregard of money.

Allowing for all the personal qualities of the senior partner, there must have been something else to account for this rapid growth of the firm's business in so short a time. What was it? Well it seems to us that a combination of happy circumstances gave the firm of Burroughs, Wellcome & Co. the premier place it occupied. First, they had something to sell, something that was wanted. English medicine was laboring in the slough of big bottles, big doses and nauseous drugs. A revolution had already taken place in favor of the elegancies of Hahnemann, but homeopathic medicines had proved useless for people with anything the matter with them. "Tabloids" hit the happy mean. They provided an allopathic dose in a convenient and palatable form. They, and the other preparations introduced by the firm, were backed by novel and continuous advertising, and in a few years the Newer Pharmacy, of which Burroughs, Wellcome & Co. were the English pioneers, had revolutionized medical prescribing in this country.

Another point which should not be overlooked, is the important fact that Burroughs was allied with just exactly the right man. No partnership could have been more ideal in its constitution. The influence of Henry S. Wellcome in cementing and organizing the business of the firm, cannot be lost sight of in commenting on the brilliancies of the senior partner. While Burroughs was a man of intense mental, physical and commercial energy, of buoyant individuality and brilliant initiative, he lacked that steady persistence, that capacity for governing and directing others, that shrewder judgment and that love of executive work and care for detail that distinguished his partner. Burroughs threw off multitudes of crude, red-hot ideas; Wellcome, brimming over with energy and originality himself, had sometimes to work out Burroughs' as well as his own ideas before they could be given to the world as definite, artistic entities. And, again, they were well backed with capital. It has been freely stated in some of the many notices of Mr. Burroughs' life that have appeared since his death that he came to London a poor man; in fact, almost walked into it with the proverbial half-crown. Such was far from being the case. The firm had ample capital and spent their money freely but judiciously, in carefully considered advertisement of irreproachable preparations, and their reward was commensurate to their wisdom.

